

Environmental Resources Section

Emily Fleming, Chief

The Environmental Resources Section is charged with administering environmental education programs, litter control and recycling programs; organizing and directing a junior conservation camp; and promoting a variety of other educational activities. All are designed to increase the public awareness of environmental practices, methods of litter control, and available services. Litter control and recycling grants are also administered by this office. The following programs were emphasized during 2002-2003.

West Virginia Youth Environmental Program



MISSION STATEMENT:

"Empowering West Virginia's Youth to Become Environmentally Involved Within Their Communities." The West Virginia Youth Environmental Program enrollment for 2002-2003 consisted of 677 youth groups representing 62,808 members from all 55 counties.

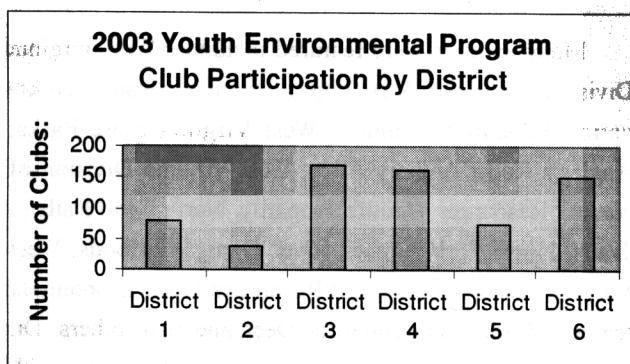
GOALS/OBJECTIVES:

- Forward Youth Environmental Program enrollment information to every school, county 4-H extension agent, Boy and Girl Scout councils.
 - Coordinate the annual Youth Environmental Day activities to make the cash award presentations to the winning youth groups.
 - Sponsor the annual West Virginia Division of Natural Resources' Junior Conservation Camp for youth ages 11-14.
 - Plan and coordinate the annual Youth Environmental Conference for youth ages 13-18 who are members of the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program.
 - Increase the total number of youth groups enrolled in the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program by 30 clubs over 2003's total. Additionally, the number of active youth groups already enrolled in the program will be maintained for 2004.
 - Increase the number of reports submitted by youth groups for judging of award eligibility by 9 over the 2003 total.
 - Promote participation in the program through radio and newspaper advertising.
- Provide youth groups enrolled in the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program with an abundance of environmental education tools and information.
 - Enable six district environmental coordinators to make personal contacts, give workshops, programs, presentations, and set up displays throughout the state promoting the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program.
 - Maintain continuity of award contributions by promoting the benefits of participating in the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program as an award sponsor with environmentally concerned businesses and organizations.
 - Utilize the media to publicize the statewide activities of the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program and its members.

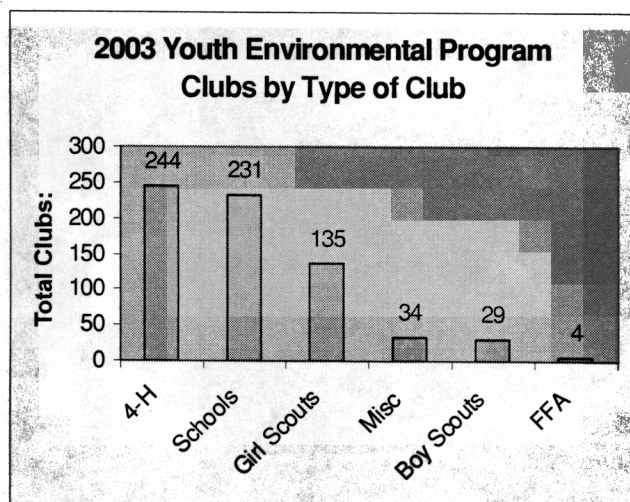
Six district environmental coordinators provide environmental education and outreach to various youth organizations located in the counties that make up the six Division of Natural Resources districts. They extensively promote

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the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program by providing programs, presentations, workshops and displays, and distributing materials to schools and at youth group meetings. The following graph shows the number of youth groups enrolled in the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program by DNR District.



Youth groups enrolled in the Youth Environmental Program are making a contribution towards a better environment for all West Virginia citizens. The program encourages youth groups such as Boy and Girl Scout troops, 4-H clubs, FFA chapters, elementary, junior high and high schools, church youth groups, etc., to conduct community based environmental projects. The following chart shows the Youth Environmental Program enrollment by type of club.



These young people are challenged and provided opportunities for participating in projects such as litter control, recycling, beautification, tree planting, backyard composting, environmental education, etc. Incentives are offered for participation with more than \$11,000 in cash awards secured from environmentally concerned businesses

and organizations. Columbia Gas Transmission of Charleston is the corporate sponsor of the program. Also, a \$2,500 per year, four-year scholarship is available to a graduating high school senior who has been a member of the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program for at least one year and has participated in some phase of environmental activities. The scholarship is provided by the Vecellio Family Foundation of Beckley. To compete for the cash awards and scholarships, youth groups submitted reports of their projects from April 16, 2002, through April 15, 2003, which were judged for eligibility.

Brochures and enrollment forms are mailed each year to all schools, Boy and Girl Scout councils, and county 4-H extension agents. Each youth group that enrolls receives a packet which contains useful environmental information including an official certificate of enrollment, a prepared news release for local newspapers, ideas for projects, and a list of available awards. The West Virginia Youth Environmental Program has played an extremely important role in creating interest and enthusiasm for environmental stewardship of our natural resources by involving families and communities working together in action projects, and by creating interest and support among adult organizations.

Youth groups enrolled in the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program are offered half-price tree seedlings up to \$1,000 from the West Virginia Division of Forestry's State Tree Nursery. These seedlings are provided through a sponsorship from the James Harless Foundation of Gilbert and the Bernard McDonough Foundation of Parkersburg. For the 2002-2003 year, 13,764 trees were planted by youth groups. Of those, 9,530 were tree seedlings purchased at half price by 15 youth groups and planted in 12 different counties.

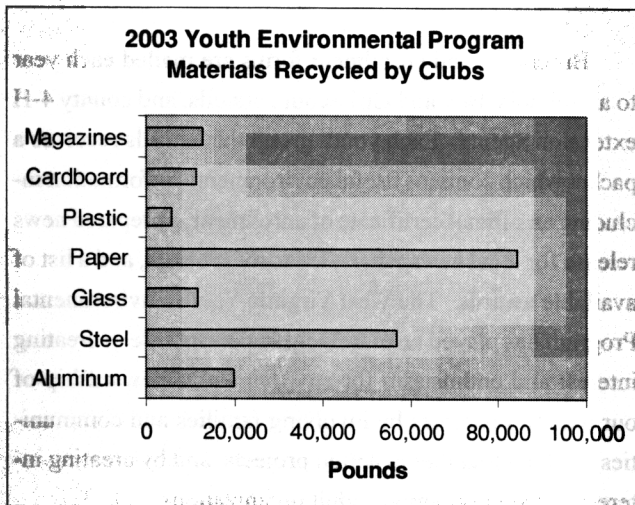
Based on the information contained in the 79 reports submitted for judging, the following is an example of additional environmental projects that were accomplished by youth groups enrolled in the Youth Environmental Program for 2002-2003:

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RECYCLING:

- 19,824 pounds of aluminum
- 11,412 pounds of cardboard
- 11,880 pounds of glass
- 5,618 pounds of plastic*
- 56,602 pounds of steel
- 84,199 pounds of paper
- 12,862 pounds of magazines

*492,441 plastic shopping bags were also recycled



LITTER CONTROL:

- 158 miles of roadways were cleaned
- 2,062 bags of trash were collected
- 1,032 tires were collected from cleaning several open dump sites

BEAUTIFICATION:

- 16,228 flowers and shrubs were planted in communities and on school grounds

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL DAY

The 40th Anniversary Celebration of Youth Environmental Day was held at North Bend State Park on Saturday, May 17, 2003, with approximately 1,200 participants in attendance. Highlighting the activities for the day was the presentation of more than \$11,000 in awards to more than 100 most deserving youth groups and individuals in recognition of their outstanding environmental accomplishments.

Special guests were Ed Hamrick, Director of the Division of Natural Resources, Doug Francis of Columbia Gas Transmission, and several other award sponsors who presented awards to the winning youth groups. Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl, and Eco the Owl were also on hand to welcome everyone to the special event.

Many exhibits were featured including West Virginia Division of Forestry, West Virginia Envirothon and Conservation Education Council, West Virginia State Parks, Angler's Roost Archery Alley, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Jeopardy, North Bend Rails to Trails, North Fork Hughes River Dam, Wildfoods, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Law Enforcement featuring Eddie Eagle and Robo Deer, and many others. Dr. Stacy Groscup from Morgantown entertained everyone with his famous archery and tomahawk demonstration during lunchtime.

The six Environmental Resources Section district environmental coordinators presented a program on Friday night preceding Saturday's annual awards day activities. J. R.'s Sound and Lighting from Mineral Wells hosted the dance on Saturday night for all participants staying the weekend.



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JUNIOR CONSERVATION CAMP

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Junior Conservation Camp is open to anyone ages 11 to 14. It was held at Cedar Lakes in Ripley, July 7-11, 2003. Junior Conservation Camp offers a wide variety of classes that enhance the participant's knowledge of the environment and enables them to become good stewards of our natural resources. Approximately 200 campers attended and participated in such classes as wildlife, archery, orienteering, recycling, soil conservation, hunter education, water study, forestry, and fishing. Sports activities included basketball, kickball, volleyball, relay races, and more.



YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE

The Twenty-Seventh Youth Environmental Conference was held at the Holiday Inn, Martinsburg, October 25-27, 2002, for young people ages 13 to 18 who are members of the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program. Approximately 150 participants attended workshops Friday evening on Project Wet, Project Wild, Forest Fire Prevention, Junk Jeopardy and Recycling.



The Friday night program was given by Ranger John Powell of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. All participants attended a tour to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park which included Virginus Island on Saturday. At a banquet and program on Saturday evening, participants reported on assignments based on information obtained from the tour of the park, a dance followed the program. Sunday morning featured an Idea Swap in which representatives from each youth group gave a report of their Most Successful Project and provided handouts in the form of instructions, lists of materials, resource lists, etc., so that the project could be shared by other groups.

Next year's Youth Environmental Conference will be held October 24-26, 2003, at the Holiday Inn, Martinsburg.

LONG-TERM GOALS/OBJECTIVES

A budget increase in general revenue funding is needed to cover operating expenses for the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program in the amount of \$250,000.

A specific operations budget will enable the program to improve environmental education and outreach efforts, expand training for staff and program members, enhance the number and quality of existing environmental programs, implement a plan for media outlets, and develop promotional items and educational resource materials.

Funding allocations for the awards system will allow the program to stop relying so heavily on contributions from outside sources to maintain its effectiveness. It is taking an increased number of sponsors to maintain the current level of awards contributions. It is a difficult challenge to maintain sponsors of the awards as there is no guarantee from year to year that the same number of sponsors and the same amount they contribute will be available. This is due to organizations and businesses downsizing, cutting budgets, and canceling nonessential contributions.

Funding allocations are needed for additional training sessions for all district environmental coordinators and other staff members to better enable them to promote the program.